

Application No. 10/781,138
Amendment Dated: January 9, 2007
Reply to Office Action of September 6, 2006

Please replace paragraph [0029] beginning at page 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0029] **Fig. 2** illustrates a package 20 embodying certain features of the present invention. The package 20 includes an elongated carrier 21 having a plastic base 22 with an elongated recess 23 formed therein. The ~~cavity~~ ~~recess~~ 23 contains a flexible foam insert 24 having a plurality of cavities 25 therein adapted to receive and to snugly but releasably hold an orthodontic ~~appliance, for example~~ ~~an orthodontic~~ bracket 30, as illustrated in more detail in **Fig. 2A**. The base 22 of the carrier 21 has a tab or handle 26 formed at one end thereof that is part of a flat flange 27 that extends in a plane around the recess 23. The package 20 includes a clear plastic cover 28 that slides over the carrier 21, having internal channels formed therein into which the flange 27 of the base 22 fit. The cover 28 covers the brackets 30 and keeps them in the cavities 25 for shipment from the bracket manufacturer.

Please replace paragraphs [0032]-[0035] beginning at page 7, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

[0032] According to a method of the present invention, brackets 30 are loaded onto a set-up tray 10 from the carriers ~~[20]~~ ~~21~~, ~~illustrated as carriers 21a and 21b,~~ by personnel at a treating orthodontic practitioner's office with the use of an organizer 40, illustrated in **Fig. 3**, also according to the present invention. The organizer 40 includes an organizer tray 41 and a storage base 42. Both the organizer tray 41 and storage base 42 ~~is~~ ~~are~~ each preferably made of a respective integral piece of molded plastic, although metal or other materials may be used.

[0033] The organizer tray 41 has a four-sided, set-up tray support or set-up-tray-receiving recess 43 formed at its center and a plurality of appliance holders 44. The holders are in the form of three-sided, open-ended, carrier-receiving recesses or slots [44], half of which are formed along one side of the organizer tray 41 and half formed along the opposite side of the organizer tray 41. The holders 44 are configured to hold the appliances, ~~such as brackets~~ 30, preferably in packages of appliances, such as the carriers 21. The number of the ~~carrier-receiving recesses~~ ~~holders~~ 44 is equal to the maximum number of brackets 30 that will form an orthodontic brace, typically twenty-eight.

[0034] As illustrated in **Figs. 3 and 3A**, the organizer tray 41 is prepared by placing in the recess 43 an empty set-up tray 10 that is to be loaded with brackets from carriers 21. Carriers 21 containing brackets 30 are inserted into the ~~slots~~holders 44 of the organizer tray 41, with their covers 28 removed, by sliding the flanges 27 onto grooves 45 in the sides of the ~~slots~~holders 44, with the handles or tabs 26 of the carriers 21 at the open ends of the ~~carrier-receiving recesses~~holders 44. Each ~~slot~~holder 44 receives a carrier 21 containing brackets for a different one of the teeth. The carriers 21 containing the different brackets 30 of a set are loaded into the ~~slots~~holders 44 of the organizer tray 41 in the same relative order as the staging areas 15 and 16 are arranged on the set-up card, with the upper bracket carriers 21, carriers 21a, along the side 46 that is adjacent the upper bracket mounting area 13 of the set-up tray 10, while the carriers 21 and with the lower bracket carriers 21, carriers 21b, along the side 47 that is adjacent the lower bracket mounting area 14 of the set-up tray 10. That is, the fourteen ~~slots~~holders 44 along the side 46 of the organizer tray 41 contain brackets 30 for the upper teeth, arranged, left to right with brackets for the upper right second molar to the upper left second molar, and the fourteen ~~slots~~holders 44 along the side 47 of the organizer tray 41 contain brackets 30 for the lower teeth, arranged, left to right with brackets for the lower right second molar to the lower left second molar.

[0035] The base 42 contains hollow storage compartment 51-53, as illustrated in **Figs. 3B and 4**. The compartment 51 is directly beneath the recess 43 in the organizer tray 41 when the tray 41 is in a closed position over the base 42 (**Fig. 3**). The compartment 51 contains a supply of empty set-up trays 10. Similarly, the compartment 52 is directly beneath the ~~slots~~holders 44 on side 46 of the organizer tray 41 when the tray 41 is in this closed position and holds a supply of carriers 21a that contain upper brackets 30; and the compartment 53 is directly beneath the ~~slots~~holders 44 on side 47 of the organizer tray 41 when in the closed position and holds a supply of carriers 21b that contain lower brackets 30.

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[0037] Further, a lid 50 may be provided to cover the organizer tray 41 so that the entire organizer 40 can be stored when partially empty carriers 21 are present in the ~~slots~~holders 44 of the organizer tray 41. This allows the organizer 40 to be stored in any condition at the office of the orthodontic practitioner. Typically, a slotted cabinet or rack (not shown) is provided at the practitioner's office for storage of organizer trays 40 containing different bracket prescriptions or types.

[0038] The use of the organizer 40 is illustrated in **Figs. 6 and 6A**. The contemplated typical use of the organizer 40 involves the use of the organizer tray 41 by an orthodontic assistant to load a set-up tray 10 with one set of orthodontic brackets 30 to provide to the treating practitioner in installing the brackets 30 on the teeth of a patient. The assistant may use the organizer tray 41 separate from the base 42, or with the base 42 still attached. In loading a set-up tray 10, supported in the recess 43 at the center of the organizer tray 41, the assistant may use an instrument such as a pair of tweezers 60 to transfer each bracket 30 of a set from a hole 25 in a carrier 21 onto a staging area 15 for the particular bracket 30 on the set-up tray 10. The brackets 30 are placed on the staging areas 15 of the set-up tray 10 with their occlusal sides 37 facing the centerline 19 of the set-up tray 10. Because the brackets 30 are provided in the carriers 21 with their gingival edges facing the handles 26 of the carriers 21, and the carriers 21 are loaded into the ~~slots~~holders 44 on the organizer tray 41, the brackets 30 are oriented on the organizer tray 41 so their occlusal edges face the centerline 19 of the set-up tray 10 that is supported in the recess 43. Accordingly, a mere translation, with no rotation, is all that is required to load a bracket 30 from a carrier 21 to the set-up tray 10.

[0039] The organizer tray 41 is, in the preferred embodiment, loaded with supplies of brackets 30 from the compartments 52 and 53 beneath the corresponding ~~slots~~holders 44 of the tray 41. This loading is carried out by removing one of the packages or carriers 21 from the compartment 52 or 53 and sliding the flanges 27 of the carriers 21 into the slots 45 of the tray 41, with the handles 26 of the carriers 21 facing away from the recess 43 that holds the set-up tray 10. In

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an alternative embodiment, the carriers 21 and the holders 44 may be configured so that the brackets
30 or other appliances [30] can be transferred from the alternatively configured versions of the
packages 21 to alternatively configured versions of the holders 44, with their orientations preferably
preserved in the transfer.